
From: Donald C. Strimbeck
To: Richardson, William; Werner Loehlein; Tom Mroz; Steve Garvin; Skip Pratt; Scott The Missing Link Link; Ryan Dean; Robert Sheedy; Richard Walters; Richard Collier; Peggy Sue Miller; Paul Hamrick; Paul B. Brown; Patrick Campbell; Mike Withers; Mike Manypenny; Melissa O'Neal; Nelson, Mark; Reynolds, Louis; Leroy Stanley; Merrill, Larry; Joseph Swearman; Capacasa, Jon; John Yesenosky; John Snyder; John M. Love; John M. Angiulli MEPCO; Forren, John; John Flynn; John Eleyette; John Duda; John Duarte; Joe Lapcevic; Jim Sconyers; Jim Evans; Jim Ammer; Jerod Harman; Jerald Fletcher; Jason Walls; Greg Bellich; BORSUK, FRANK; Erin Halloran; Emily Perrotta; Ed Wade; Don Spencer; Don Garvin; Deb Fulton; David Wellman; Dave Johnson; Dave Bean; Daniel Soeder; Cynthia Loomis; Curtis Meeder; Cookie Coombs GMCVB; Constance Miller; Charlie Byrer; Bryan Moore; Brent Wiles; Bob Wells Zinka-Ent Inc; Bob Ventorini; Bill Wyant; Bill Schuller; Bill Byrne; Athey Lutz; McFadden, Angela
Sent: 5/15/2013 4:53:40 AM
Subject: Fw: DAILY UPDATE 15 May 2013. News of interest to Mon river watershed denizens.
Attachments: DUNKARD CREEK-15MayY2K13.doc

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----- Original Message -----

From: Donald C. Strimbeck

To: Tom Bond ; Tom & Barbara Bartlett ; Teresa Crane ; Sophie Cash-Goldwasser ; Shari Wilson ; Sera Janson Zegre ; Senator Jack Yost ; Sandra Fallon ; Sam Dinkins ORSANCO ; Rose Edington ; Robert Vagnetti ; Rick Humphreys ; Rich Rodriguez ; Rich Dennis ; Renee Jensen ; Peter Cuffaro ; Patti Miller ; Mike Buchanan ; Mary Rae Benson ; Martha Schwab ; Marigrace Butela ; Lourdes Cottingham ; Louanne Fatora ; Leigh Cedar ; Leigh Ann Keener ; Kitty Lozier ; Kevin Yokum ; Kevin Logan ; Kevin Coyne ; Kathleen Cash ; Julie Archer ; Judith Wilkinson ; Joyce Johnston ; John Wirts ; John Lozier ; John King ; John Goldwasser ; Joe Gorman ; Jim Snyder ; Jessica H. Greathouse ; Jennifer Lynn ; Jay Bucklew ; Jannette Barth ; Jack Thompson ; Howard Clark ; Horse Park USA ; Gregory A. Niverth ; Glen Kelly ; George Racin ; Garry Berti ; Frank Blaskovich ; Estelle Lombardi ; Erich Emery ; David Beard ; Connie Watson ; Cindy Ashworth ; Chuck Wyrostok ; Chip West ; Casey Junkins ; Casey Griffith ; Carol Mapstone ; Candace Jordan ; Bruce Edinger ; Brian Osborn ; Brian K. Parker ; Brent Cassell ; Bonnie Hall ; Bill Yahner ; Bill Weiss ; Bene Bonfili ; Ashley Petraglia ; Amelia Plank ; Aaron Williams ; Dave Cassell

Sent: Wednesday, May 15, 2013 4:52 AM

Subject: DAILY UPDATE 15 May 2013. News of interest to Mon river watershed denizens.

DUNKARD CREEK-15MayY2K13

by Aaron Kendeall
Staff Writer
akendeall@observer-reporter.com
Washington Co.

Fredericktown Ferry's fate rests with vote

Tuesday, May 14, 2013

The fate of the Fredericktown Ferry will be discussed at the Fayette County commissioners meeting.

Fayette County commissioners will vote later this month whether or not to dry dock the Fredericktown Ferry.

Fayette County clerk Amy Revak confirmed commissioners added two items concerning the ferry to the agenda of the next general meeting at 10 a.m. May 23 at the Fayette County Courthouse. The items were added during the monthly agenda meeting Tuesday morning.

At the public meeting next week, commissioners will decide whether Fayette County will halt operation of the Fredericktown Ferry as of September 3, 2013. A second agenda item will rescind a resolution passed in November 2012 that authorized advertising for the solicitation of bids for work to rehabilitate the ferryboat.

Revak said commissioners were discussing a roughly \$970 million Federal Transit Administration grant issued for that rehabilitation effort that must be used by the end of September. Washington and Fayette counties both earmarked \$100,000 to put toward the rehabilitation effort.

Fayette and Washington counties share operation of the boat, which transports passengers and vehicles across the Monongahela River. Ridership on the ferry has been down since the opening of the Bakewell Bridge in July, which allows motorists to cross the river on the Mon-Valley Expressway. County records show that the yearly income generated from the \$2 roundway toll dropped from \$7,588 in 2009 to \$3,555 last year. The ferryboat cost \$124,831 to operate last year.

Commissioners from both counties have been considering permanently dry-docking the vessel as its deficit continues to rise. Last year, the boat operated with a budget \$28,000 in the red, according to Fayette County records. Recently, a group unveiled a plan to turn the ferry into a permanent museum on proposed park grounds on the Fredericktown side of the Monongahela.

A ferryboat has operated on the stretch of river since the late 18th century. The current steel vessel crawls along a length of submerged cable and has been in operation since 1977.

Revak was unsure what it would mean for Washington County commissioners if they chose to keep the ferry open without the cooperation of Fayette County.

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Historic ferry could become idled

About Liz Zemba

Tribune-Review Staff Reporter Liz Zemba can be reached at 412-601-2166

By **Liz Zemba**

TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Published: Tuesday, May 14, 2013, 9:51 p.m.

Updated 6 hours ago

A Fayette County commissioner has proposed shutting down a 200-year-old ferryboat because its ridership numbers have dropped by more than half since a bridge over the Monongahela River opened last year.

Vincent Zapotosky on Tuesday said the Fredericktown Ferry costs more money to operate than it generates in revenues through fares.

Controller Sean Lally said the ferry in 2012 posted a \$44,678 loss. The \$91,063 in fares it generated in 2009 fell to \$38,219 in 2012. Fayette operates the ferry, but costs are split with Washington County.

In addition, Fayette and Washington counties contribute a combined \$155,112 toward the ferry's \$238,009 operating expenses in 2012.

On Tuesday, Zapotosky proposed sinking plans to spend as much as \$1 million to renovate the ferry in favor of

shutting it down for good on Sept. 3.

"It's an antiquated form of travel," Zapotosky said, noting average daily ridership has dropped from 247 to 90 since the opening of the bridge on the Mon-Fayette Expressway.

"Do you provide a form of travel to 90 people that costs a lot of money?" Zapotosky said. "The bottom line is, you have to stop the bleeding."

The ferry shuttles pedestrians and vehicles between Fayette and Washington counties. The two-minute trip costs 50 cents for pedestrians and \$2 per car, with higher rates for trucks and larger vehicles.

The ferry runs from 6:15 a.m. to 9:45 p.m. weekdays and 6:15 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. on Saturdays.

Zapotosky has proposed rescinding an earlier resolution that called for renovating the ferry, with part of the cost to be covered by a federal grant of up to \$970,000 that was first made available to the county in 2008 through the Port of Pittsburgh Commission.

Fayette and Washington would be required to split a 20 percent match to the federal grant, with the amount to be determined by the overall cost of the project. The cost to renovate the ferry has been estimated at between \$400,000 and \$1 million, Zapotosky said.

Even if Fayette decided to go ahead with renovations to the ferry instead of closing, the Port of Pittsburgh Commission likely would re-evaluate its offer because it was made before the expressway bridge was built, said James McCarville, the commission's executive director.

"With the analysis we did several years ago, at that time, we thought it was a good project," McCarville said. "We would have to look at it again, because the Mon-Fayette Expressway has been built, and that could change things." Zapotosky said the majority of ferryboat users work at the State Correctional Institution at Fayette in Luzerne. He said absent the ferry, they can take the expressway and bridge.

"The commute would be 10 to 12 miles farther on the expressway," Zapotosky said. "I know it's an inconvenience, but is it practical any longer to operate a ferry?"

Larry Maggi, commissioner chairman in Washington County, did not return a phone call seeking comment.

Fayette commissioners will discuss Zapotosky's proposals during their regular monthly meeting at 10 a.m. Tuesday at the Public Service Building, 22 E. Main St., Uniontown.

Liz Zemba is a reporter for Trib Total Media. She can be reached at 412-601-2166 or lzemba@tribweb.com.

Re WALL STREET JOURNAL ARTICLE below, yeah, not in Mon river watershed. But it is amazing re number of articles we see re invasive non-native flora and fauna whatever occurring in United States!!

- May 13, 2013, 7:27 p.m. ET

Predator Fish in Cross Hairs

Western States Cull Pike, Citing Threat to Native Species; Anglers Up in Arms

By **JIM CARLTON**

Jim Carlton for The Wall Street Journal

Rich Lindsey, a fishing guide from Priest Lake, Idaho, and other anglers say a pike-culling effort in Box Canyon Reservoir by Washington state officials and the Kalispel Native American tribe is hurting tourism.

USK, Wash.—Biologists in the West are waging a slaughter campaign against a nonnative fish invading from the East, but some anglers are up in arms about the war on the species.

Biologists working for states and Indian tribes say the northern pike, a voracious omnivore, is wiping out native species such as trout and salmon as it spreads rapidly across the western U.S. via rivers and interconnected lakes.

A pike cull is in its second year in northeastern Washington, focused on Box Canyon Reservoir near the Idaho border. There, biologists say a proliferation of pike since 2006 has raised concerns the predator's reach might continue downstream and threaten a salmon fishery that federal officials have spent billions to try to restore.

Jim Carlton for The Wall Street Journal

A crew recently used gill nets to catch the invasive fish, shown.

This weekend, the Kalispel Indian tribe is sponsoring a "PikePalooza" for anglers to catch as many pike as they can,

with cash prizes. "We know what will happen if we do nothing, and it's not a pretty picture," said Jason Connor, fisheries-management program manager for the tribe, whose reservation adjoins the reservoir. The body of water is part of the Pend Oreille River, which briefly flows north into Canada before returning into the U.S. and ending in the Columbia River.

The pike threat is part of a growing wave of nonnative species wreaking havoc on parts of the country. In the Florida Everglades, Burmese pythons have proliferated, gobbling up native animals, according to National Park Service officials. Zebra mussels, native to Eastern Europe, have spread to at least 30 states from coast to coast, causing ecological damage, including to native mussels, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In the Southwest, Africanized honeybees have created a public-safety threat.

Pike—native in the U.S. east of the Rockies and in parts of Alaska, where they generally coexist with other fish—have migrated in recent decades as far as California, in most cases after being illegally introduced into lakes, according to experts.

The invasion is causing so much damage to fisheries that wildlife managers have resorted to some drastic measures. At California's Lake Davis, state officials in 2007 used a poison called rotenone to kill them off. At Eagle Nest Lake in New Mexico, the state in 2012 lifted all fishing limits on pike. Arizona, Montana and Alaska state officials in recent years have used gill nets to trap and remove them. The nets, which ensnare fish by the gills, commonly are anchored from buoys across a stretch of lake or river to catch fish as they swim through.

But the pike have their defenders: sport fishermen, who prize the toothy, spotted fish for their fighting ability and size, up to 55 pounds. Anglers complain the control efforts are unnecessary and hurt local tourism.

At Box Canyon Reservoir, many sportsmen hope their complaints will persuade officials to stop the pike kill.

"There's not going to be any fish left when they're done," said John Campbell, owner of a sporting-goods store in Oldtown, Idaho.

The war on the species has crippled the area's once-thriving pike-fishing industry, said Rich Lindsey, a fishing guide from Priest Lake, Idaho, who said he bought a \$60,000 boat in 2010 to take clients out for pike on the reservoir. Mr. Lindsey, 63 years old, said he had to sell the 23-foot boat at a \$20,000 loss. He and other critics of the culling program say that pike, if left alone, would find their own equilibrium.

"We've had this stuff shoved down our throats," he said.

The pike in Box Canyon originated from the Flathead River system in northwest Montana, where someone illegally introduced them in the 1950s, said Jim Vashro, regional fisheries manager for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. By 2005, he said, the pike had spread to 66 bodies of water in that part of the state, despite control efforts that included poisoning of about a dozen small lakes. Mr. Vashro said there are now too many pike to eradicate—managing them is the only option.

In Washington, Kalispel tribal managers said they first documented the invaders in 2004, catching 27 northern pike in the reservoir that year. Fish surveys showed the numbers had surged to 500 adult pike in 2006 and to 5,500 by 2010. Over that period, tribal managers said they documented drops—in some cases precipitous—of resident fish including perch and trout.

"We started getting really, really worried," said Deane Osterman, executive director of the tribe's natural-resources department.

Tribal officials said they alerted the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, which classified the pike as prohibited last year. The state agency and the tribe embarked on a joint effort to cull the invaders. The agency's prime concern: Spawning grounds of endangered salmon and steelhead, which the pike also prey on, are located only 200 miles downstream.

Biologists ruled out poison, instead deploying gill nets. On a recent blustery day, three crewmen in a flat-bottomed boat pulled a net out of a shallow lake area called a slough, tossing the pike in a box while throwing other fish back. In all, about 10,000 pike have been removed from the reservoir since 2012 in this manner, biologists say.

"Getting rid of the bad fish to keep the good ones," said Taj Salmeri, 37, a crew member from Newport, Wash., as he pulled in four pike while throwing back 20 fish of other species. Fisheries managers rate the removal program a success so far but say new pike keep swimming into the reservoir.

"Frankly," said Mr. Vashro, the Montana biologist, "they won't be able to stop them from going down. They will slow them down, but not stop them."

Write to Jim Carlton at jim.carlton@wsj.com

A version of this article appeared May 14, 2013, on page A3 in the U.S. edition of The Wall Street Journal, with the headline: Predator Fish in Cross Hairs.

----- Original Message -----

From: [Glenn Waldron](#)
To: [Donald Srimbeck](#)
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2013 3:27 PM
Subject: Daily Update News

Greetings Don,

Wanted to be sure to pass along this press piece about our recent 3 Rivers QUEST Mini-Grant check presentation event that took place on Monday, May 6.

In total, \$40,000 was awarded to 10 watershed organizations here in the Monongahela River Basin to participate in the 3RQ - A regional water quality monitoring and reporting program administered by WVVRI.

Here is a link to the full piece: <http://3riversquest.org/west-virginia-water-research-institute-provides-40000-in-grant-funding-to-local-watershed-organizations/>

Thanks Don!

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----- Original Message -----

From: [Frack Check WV](#)
To: dcsoinks@comcast.net
Sent: Wednesday, May 15, 2013 3:03 AM
Subject: The Shale Gas Review: Frack Chemicals and Water Contamination

Commentary from Tom Wilber, The Shale Gas Review, May 10, 2013

The migration of fracking chemicals in the soil, in the earth's strata and in groundwater are problems that are not fully understood. Plus, the chemicals resulting from drilling and fracking contain some toxic materials that have been leached from the earth or exposed by the drilling and frack operations. Tom Wilber in his blog entitled "[Shale Gas Review](#)" takes up these topics.

The gas industry claims that drilling is not a public health threat, and that fracking fluid is harmless. In support of these claims it cites lack of evidence tying operations to pollution and illness. What's missing is full disclosure. The industry operates on private property without the level of regulatory oversight that other industries face. (It is exempt from both federal Safe Drinking Water Act and hazardous waste laws that require disclosure of what goes into and what comes out of the ground.)

When something goes wrong, it is often a matter between the company and the homeowner to resolve. When legal pressure necessitates, the industry can make the problem go away with settlements that contain non-disclosure clauses.

A recent example came to light with a personal injury claim against Range Resources and other operators by a family in Mt. Pleasant Township, Pa. Range Resources agreed to pay the Hallowich family \$750,000 to settle a lawsuit for personal injury damages related to operations near their home. The case was settled by the parties in 2011, no official complaint was filed, and the records were sealed.

We only know this because the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and the Washington Observer-Reporter filed and won a suit to get the records unsealed. The unsealed documents also revealed that the PA Department of Environmental Protection did not maintain records of an investigation into a complaint about water contamination at a neighboring property, and that the investigator, Mark

Kiel, soon left the agency to work for the gas drilling company he had been investigating. For every case that gets unsealed, there are hundreds, if not thousands of cases sealed in documents that are never opened because their public relevance goes unchallenged.

Meanwhile, both the DEP and gas companies are able to keep matters of public interest unfolding in Susquehanna County from full public view. Last week, the DEP issued a brief statement that exonerated gas company WPX of causing methane pollution in three wells in the Township of Franklin Forks. Yet the agency is not releasing any results related to the investigation or to its conclusions. It is known that the Franklin Forks area and the nearby Salt Springs State Park contain rich methane reservoirs in both deep and shallow formations (hence the attractiveness of the area to petroleum operators). Although the DEP released its conclusions that the gas affecting the water wells was not from nearby gas wells or production zones being tapped by WPX, it did not explain the source or course of pollution at concentrations five times greater than the threshold for explosion risks.

Franklin Forks may have been less of a story if not for events that have unfolded in Dimock Township, about a dozen miles to the south. More than four years after the explosion of a residential water well called attention to the problem, the DEP is still investigating recurring water pollution problems in the middle of a gas field being developed by Cabot Oil & Gas. Wells providing water to several dozen homes have been taken off line or fitted with filtration equipment to remove gas and other pollution since the water well of Norma Fiorentino exploded on New Year's Day, 2009. Under the Rendell administration, the DEP cited Cabot for various violations related to the problems.

Now Governor Tom Corbett's DEP is investigating cases involving two homes in an area where the agency has banned drilling of new wells in the wake of chronic water problems. Recent tests showed dangerous levels of methane flowing into residential water wells near the junction of Carter Road and State Route 3023. Yet the problem, in the eyes of the DEP, remains elusive. "We are slowly getting some test results back," DEP spokeswoman Colleen Connolly said. "However – as per our attorney, DEP does not share test results from private water wells with anyone but the private well owner."

To be clear, the agency has a policy of releasing incomplete data to homeowners, a policy that has produced much criticism but little action. Officials justify the long-standing practice of excluding some fields as a sound method to filter noise from relevant data. Critics argue that the agency cherry picks the data, and the unreleased fields might be useful indicators of drilling contamination and other problems. Moreover, homeowners have a right to all results of water quality tests that can flag health risks.

The fight over the cause and consequences of methane seeping into private water wells in Susquehanna County is one example of an issue that could stand a little more legal leverage from professional news outlets. While some outlets, including the Scranton Times-Tribune, do what they can with declining resources to report the story, readers would be well served by a legal challenge to the DEP's refusal to release ground water analysis paid for by tax-payer money concerning matters of overwhelming public interest.

----- Original Message -----

From: [montrails announcements](#)

To: dcsoinks@comcast.net

Sent: Wednesday, May 15, 2013 12:00 AM

Subject: Mon River Trails Conservancy announcements

Deckers Creek Trail Half Marathon

Saturday, June 1, 2013

Registration nearing a close with deadline set for May 22, 2013 or until we reach 600. Sign up now to get in on the fun and help with the rail-trail cause. **Run the Deckers Creek Trail Half Marathon**

www.montrails.org **Volunteer for Ragnar Relay Race and Earn Funds for Mon River Trails Conservancy!**

Big Bear Campgrounds- June 7-8

Ragnar Events is hosting a 2 day Ragnar Relay Race with over 1,000 runners expected at Big Bear Campgrounds (near the air field) in Preston County. Volunteers are needed at Team Check-In, Traffic/Parking control, and Assignment of Campgrounds on Friday, June 7. For every 4.5 hour shift you contribute, MRTC receives \$60 or 9 hour shift, \$120.

Free campground space with MRTC possible (space limited) and no entrance fee to enjoy the festivities and earn funds for our local rail-trails. Need to hear from you by Thursday, May 16. If interested, Contact Ella Belling at ella@montrails.org or 304-692-6782.

CHARLESTON GAZETTE

Crackdown on illegal swimming at Tygart Lake By The Associated Press

GRAFTON, W. Va. -- State authorities are cracking down on illegal swimming at Tygart Lake.

Swimming from the lake's shoreline at the Pleasant Creek Wildlife Management Area is prohibited. Swimming from watercraft is allowed.

Division of Natural Resources wildlife chief Curtis Taylor says in a news release that illegal swimming from the shoreline has created public safety concerns. Taylor says the swimming also is affecting boat launching at Pleasant Creek's boat ramp.

The lake's public shoreline swimming area at Tygart Lake State Park's beach area has been closed for several years. It's scheduled to reopen in 2014.

Lodge and cottage guests at the park can swim without charge at Grafton's city swimming pool.

Must-read new report: The decline of Central Appalachian coal production will continue

May 14, 2013 by Ken Ward Jr.

"... While it is generally accepted that the CAPP coal industry faces a substantial and continued overall decline, it is difficult to know exactly what the future holds for the region's coal industry, and even more difficult to know how individual coal-producing counties will be affected."

That's one of the conclusions from a brand new and very important report from the folks at the Morgantown-based consulting group Downstream Strategies. It called "*The Continuing Decline in Demand for Central Appalachian Coal: Market and Regulatory Influences*" and it's just out this morning. You can read it [here](#).

The most significant among a long list of key findings:

Central Appalachian coal production has declined significantly in recent years and will continue to decline — Central Appalachian coal production reached an all-time peak of 294 million tons in 1990 and peaked a second time at 291 million tons in 1997. Since then, production has declined by 55% in Tennessee, 44% in eastern Kentucky, 37% in Virginia, and 29% in southern West Virginia. As of 2011, regional coal production amounted to 185 million tons—17% of total United States coal production.

The federal Energy Information Administration projects that regional production will decline by 53% from 2011 through 2040, representing 98 million tons of annual production. Most importantly, 86% of this decline is projected to occur by 2020. This fact alone highlights the importance of identifying where the decline may have the greatest negative impact on local coal production, in order to understand which coal-producing communities face the greatest economic challenges in the coming years as a result of the decline.

But there's also important finding:

Employment and tax trends will not necessarily follow production trends — In recent years, employment has grown—despite the continuing decline in production. In 2011, direct mining employment totaled 37,800 jobs. ***Even as coal production declines in the future across the region, coal mining jobs are projected to increase due to a decline in labor productivity.*** Employment and tax trends will not necessarily follow production trends. However, as a result of the overall decline in coal production, the job and revenue benefits will not be spread evenly across all counties. ***Some coal-producing counties may experience significant declines in both jobs and revenues, while other counties may experience increases. The resulting expectation is that the benefits of coal production may become more concentrated in fewer counties.***

This may seem like a new idea to many folks. But Coal Tattoo readers may recall that it's a possibility raised before by the West Virginia Center for Budget and Policy, which [reported last September](#):

The projected decline of Central Appalachian coal production is one of the biggest challenges facing the state in the near future. While there are many reasons for the decline, some are irreversible, as much of the easy to reach coal has been mined out. This has prompted a great deal of concern in the state, chiefly regarding the potential loss of coal mining jobs, as it is assumed that as coal production falls, so will employment.

But that may not necessarily be the case. Some numbers suggest that while there may be an initial decline in employment, the job numbers may bounce back, and actually increase in the future. The reason? Falling productivity.

As Ted points out in his post, and again in the 2012 SWWV when mining productivity falls, employment can actually go up, as it takes more miners to mine the same amount of coal. And coal mining productivity has been falling in West Virginia as easy to mine coal is mined out. In 2000 the state mined 10,000 tons per worker, while in 2010, productivity had fallen to 6,600 tons per worker.

More on that in a minute. But let's first remember that Downstream Strategies produced an initial look at this same issue back in January 2010. It was called The Decline of Central Appalachian Coal and the Need for Economic Diversification and you can read it [here](#). In a press release this morning, Downstream Strategies principal Evan Hansen said:

Since we released our 2010 report, the decline of the region's coal industry has been publicly acknowledged by both industry leaders and state policymakers. Our new report illustrates how the industry's many challenges will likely lead to even lower production levels in the future.

And lead report author Rory McIlmoil said:

Numerous factors influence demand for Central Appalachian coal, each of which has had—and will continue to have—a significant impact on the local economies where the coal is mined. In 2010, we recommended that state and local leaders take immediate steps to help diversify coalfield economies. To a large extent, that has not happened. However, it is vital that public officials begin making the political and financial investments necessary to build the foundation for new economic development opportunities in coal-producing counties.

Now, there's a lot in this 140-page report, and we'll be talking more about it in coming days, weeks and months. But for now, let's go back and look at this issue of how coal production in the region could decline, but tax revenues and jobs from the industry actually head the other direction.

You have to first understand the recent and long-term trends in this regard:

Coal mining jobs have been significantly impacted by demand for CAPP coal in various ways since 1985. Even as demand grew from 1985 to 1990—and then again from 1993 to 1997—the number of coal mining jobs decreased. This was the result of sharp improvements in labor productivity, which reflected a shift toward greater mechanization of the mining process, both for surface and underground mines. At the same time, production was shifting toward surface mining, which requires less labor to produce each ton of coal than underground mining. As a result of these changes, direct coal employment declined from approximately 70,000 coal miners in 1985 to

35,600 miners by 1997, representing a nearly 50% decline in only 12 years. This decline in employment occurred during the same period that CAPP coal production increased to its peak.

Since peak production in 1997, a decline in demand combined with a continued shift toward surface mining has placed continued downward pressure on direct coal employment. However, declines in labor productivity and a recent shift back to underground mining have countered the impact on employment as more labor has been required to produce each ton of coal.

And most recently:

In 2006, the number of coal mining jobs stood at 36,500, slightly higher than the 35,600 jobs that existed at peak production in 1997, even though total production had fallen by 54.5 million tons. As of 2011, despite an additional production decline of 51.5 million tons, direct mining employment was higher than in 2006, amounting to 37,800 jobs. These trends suggest that as demand for CAPP coal continues to decline, direct coal employment may still increase if labor productivity continues to decline.

The report continues:

As production declines in the future, more underground mining and/or continued declines in labor productivity will dampen the employment impact of the decline in production, and may even result in an increase in coal mining jobs.

But that doesn't mean that policymakers can just ignore the way production trends are heading:

... With the future uncertainty of markets for CAPP coal and visible shifts in demand toward coal from other basins and fuels such as natural gas (and to a smaller extent, renewable energy), the possibility of increasing coal jobs with decreasing coal production should not prevent policymakers from laying the foundation for new economic opportunities in the communities most vulnerable to declines in coal production.

Downstream Strategies did some calculations to try to begin to pinpoint where in the Central Appalachian coalfields communities are most vulnerable going forward. In West Virginia, counties listed as the most vulnerable included Boone, Kanawha, Lincoln, Mingo, Nicholas. The report concludes:

The decline in CAPP coal production has been consistent in recent years and is projected to continue into the future. Since its most recent peak of 291 million tons in 1997, production declined to 185 million tons in 2011 and is projected to fall to 128 million tons by 2020.

The impact of this decline on coal mining jobs and local economies, however, is less straightforward. In recent years, more labor has been needed to mine each ton of coal; therefore, even as coal production decreased, employment increased. In fact, direct mining employment in 2011 was higher than it was during peak production in 1997. However, while some counties have experienced an increase in employment, many counties have seen coal mining jobs decline.

These conclusions are vital for both state and local officials in determining where development efforts and financial resources should be focused. Indeed, comprehensive, focused policies and investments will be needed in order to build the foundation for new economic alternatives in coal-producing counties—especially those in which coal-related jobs will decline.

This entry was posted on Tuesday, May 14, 2013

THE STATE JOURNAL

Report: Consumer support for wind, solar dropped in 2012

Posted: May 14, 2013 12:31 PM EDT Updated: May 14, 2013 1:41 PM EDT

By Taylor Kuykendall, Reporter

According to the Energy and Environment Consumer Survey, a white paper released today by Navigant Research, favorable impressions of solar energy fell from 77 percent in 2011 to 69 percent in 2012. Wind energy suffered a similar drop from 77 percent to 69 percent.

"Since 2009, there have been steady declines in favorability for some clean energy concepts, particularly the areas that have traditionally enjoyed strong consumer support such as solar energy, wind energy, hybrid vehicles, and electric cars," says Clint Wheelock, managing director with Navigant Research. "Overall, support for clean energy concepts in our tracking survey held fairly steady from 2011 to 2012, but the decline for solar energy in particular was significant."

The only sources of energy polled that were scored favorably by a majority were solar energy, wind energy and hybrid vehicles. Electric vehicle favorability dropped below 50 percent for the first time since the survey began in 2009.

Nationwide support for clean coal technology was at 42 percent. Cap and trade had the lowest favorability ranking at 15 percent.

The following are the reported percentages of those reporting they had a favorable or very favorable view of the concept:

- Solar Energy: 69%
- Wind Energy: 66%
- Hybrid Vehicles: 61%
- Electric Cars: 49%
- Natural Gas Cars: 49%
- Clean Coal: 42%
- Nuclear Power: 41%
- Biofuels: 39%
- Smart Meters: 39%
- Smart Grid: 36%
- Carbon Offsets/Credits: 21%
- LEED Certification: 20%
- Cap and Trade: 15%

Recycling Protesters Seek Help

May 15, 2013

By SHELLEY HANSON - Staff Writer , The Intelligencer / Wheeling News-Register

WHEELING - Members of the Wheeling Water Warriors asked the Wheeling-Ohio County Board of Health on Tuesday to take a stand against GreenHunter Water's plans to open a natural gas frack water recycling plant in Warwood.

GreenHunter already owns the property on North 28th Street, but Wheeling officials maintain it must receive a zone change from the city for a portion of property containing Ohio River docks in order to use the site to load waste on barges. Company officials have estimated up to 30 trucks per day will bring wastewater to the site, where it will be stored in tanks. They hope to eventually place it on barges for further transport after it is recycled.

Some people are concerned about the hazardous chemicals and radioactive elements contained in the water and about it possibly spilling into the Ohio River or the neighborhood, both of which are about a mile north of the city's water treatment plant. GreenHunter also must receive permission to transport the water via barges from the federal Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Transportation, Department of Energy, Office of Management and Budget and the Coast Guard.

Board Chairman Dr. John Holloway said he personally is concerned about the water, but the board needs scientific evidence showing the impact such a facility could have on public health in order to take a position on the issue. Right now, he said, there is no such evidence.

"Personally, I recognize the importance of the issue, and it is very troubling for me speaking as an individual and as a Wheeling resident. I get my water from the river, too," Holloway said. "As far as this board of health, we are in no position to make a scientific determination about safety - we don't have those resources. To make a judgment ... I don't think we are in position to say it's OK or not OK. We cannot go by anecdotes. We have to go by science, and the science is lacking."

Health Officer Dr. William Mercer said the health department has been researching drilling-related issues and keeping an eye on what has occurred in other states.

"We're in a bit of a Catch-22. The fracking is here and it's ongoing. We're concerned about all the water being used and, ironically, here's a plant that would reduce the amount of water being used - it helps the situation. ... Ironically, a plant that reuses water instead of putting it into injection wells, that sounds like a good idea, but can it be safe?" Mercer said.

He added the health department is partnering with West Virginia University in an air quality study on drilling sites and their impact on people's health via data from local hospitals. This study does not take into account the impact on water, he added. The results are not expected to be ready anytime soon.

Board members were invited to attend a community meeting on the matter set for 7 p.m. May 22 in City Council chambers at the City-County Building, 1500 Chapline St.

Dispute over Pa. gas drilling fees

Tuesday, May 14, 2013

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Gov. Tom Corbett's energy executive is questioning research that says Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale impact fee will generate billions of dollars less in long-term revenue than the same natural gas production in West Virginia.

The Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center made the long-term comparison to what a five percent tax such as West Virginia's will generate, but Energy Executive Patrick Henderson says the group has a liberal bias.

Henderson says the Pennsylvania fee encourages investment and that "a job for a Pennsylvanian beats enacting a new tax."

John Hanger, a Democratic candidate for governor and former head of the state Department of Environmental Protection, says Pennsylvania's impact fee is "ridiculous" and should be more like West Virginia's tax rate.

The Policy Center says it stands by the research.

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y By Jonathan Fahey
Associated Press

Breaking News

U.S. boom transforming global oil trade

Tuesday, May 14, 2013

NEW YORK – The surge in oil production in the U.S. and Canada and shrinking oil consumption in the developed world is transforming the global oil market.

The threat of chronic oil shortages is all but gone, U.S. dependence on Middle Eastern oil will continue to dwindle, and oil will increasingly flow to the developing economies of Asia, according to a five-year outlook published Tuesday by the International Energy Agency.

The changes will have “significant consequences for the global economy and oil security,” the IEA said.

The report paints a picture of a world with plenty of oil to meet modestly growing demand. Where the oil is coming from, and where it is going, is changing dramatically, according to the IEA, an energy security and research organization based in Paris that serves 28 oil-importing countries, including the U.S.

The report does not address oil prices directly, but analysts do not expect the changing oil market dynamics to lead to sharply lower oil or gasoline prices. The abundance of oil does, however, greatly reduce the risk of sustained price surges that curtail economic growth.

The chief impetus for the changing world oil picture is the increase in production in the U.S. The U.S. created the world oil market more than a century ago and is the world’s biggest consumer, but domestic production was thought to be in permanent decline. Then drillers, inspired by high prices and armed with improving technology, learned how to produce oil from previously inaccessible rock under several U.S. states.

U.S. production reached 7.4 million barrels per day early this month, 48 percent higher than the average production in 2008 and the highest it’s been since February of 1992. The IEA expects U.S. production to reach 9.1 million barrels per day by 2018. The U.S. last produced that much oil in 1972.

Production is also projected to rise in Canada and elsewhere in the Americas, such as Brazil and Columbia. At the same time, oil demand in the U.S. and other developed nations is expected to fall slightly, a result of improved vehicle efficiency and weak economic growth. That means the U.S. will be able to satisfy most of its own needs with domestic production and oil from neighbors – and that could have geopolitical implications.

“It will affect relationships between countries. Most leaders believe they have to be nice to whoever they buy their oil from,” says Michael Levi, an energy expert at the Council on Foreign Relations and author of a recent book on the U.S. energy boom called *The Power Surge*.

U.S. petroleum imports have fallen by 22 percent since hitting a record in the middle of the last decade.

With lower demand in the West and higher production in the Americas, much less oil will flow from the Middle East to Europe and the United States. Instead, Middle Eastern oil will head to Asia and likely strengthen economic and political ties between the two regions.

Levi warns against overestimating the political and economic benefits of lower U.S. imports, however. Because the oil market is global, a supply disruption in the Middle East would send prices higher everywhere – including for U.S. consumers – even if the U.S. imports no oil from the Middle East. For that reason, the U.S. will still need to help maintain stability in the region.

Supplies in the Middle East will also change. Iraq’s production capacity is expected to grow quickly, by 1.6 million barrels per day to 4.8 million barrels per day by 2018. Meanwhile, Iran’s capacity is expected to decline by 1 million barrels per day, to 2.4 million barrels per day, as a result of Western sanctions imposed on the country’s oil and financial markets. Saudi Arabia will continue to dominate production in the region.

Other members of the Organization for Petroleum Exporting Countries, such as Venezuela and African nations, will struggle to keep up, because of political instability and difficulty attracting investment in new oil fields.

OPEC may soon face some difficult decisions if new supplies from non-OPEC countries push prices lower. The group restricts production by its members in order to keep global oil prices high. In recent years, prices have been so high that member countries have been able to produce all they want. If prices fall, however, members could be asked to cut production at a time when those countries desperately need oil revenue to fund domestic programs.

“Pressure on OPEC is going to crank up,” says Judith Dwarkin, Chief Economist at ITG Investment Research.

It is unclear whether, or how far, prices will fall. The new oil in the Americas is expensive to produce because it is found in difficult locations – deep offshore, trapped in oil sands, or in tightly-packed rock. Lower prices would force drillers to quickly pull back, or risk losing money. That would reduce supplies, and send prices back up. Analysts say that if prices fall below \$70 per barrel for a sustained period, investment in the most expensive new projects will slow.

Average oil prices have been remarkably flat over the last three years. The price of oil averaged \$95 per barrel in 2011, \$94 in 2012 and \$94 so far this year. That has kept average U.S. gasoline prices relatively stable too – averaging between \$3.51 and \$3.63 per gallon over the last three years. Tuesday’s report had little effect on daily oil markets – oil closed down less than one percent to just over \$94 per barrel.

Dwarkin expects oil prices to average near \$90 a barrel for at least the next two years.

Oil demand is shifting as much as oil supply. Developing countries will soon, as a group, consume more oil than developed countries for the first time, according to the IEA.

The Middle East and Asia will need more oil as their economies grow. At the same time, the historically big oil consumers – the U.S., Europe and Japan – will use less. Overall, global demand is expected to rise 1.2 percent per year over the next five years.

While the IEA report doesn’t address the oil market after 2018, it does suggest that the technology that helped lead to a boom in oil production in the U.S. will eventually help other countries produce more oil.

“It is impossible to ignore the possibility that current non-conventional technologies, as they spread and get both perfected and mainstreamed, could lead to a wholesale reassessment of global reserves,” the report says.

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